Rt. 9, Frederick, Md. 21701
4/5/74

Dear Ben Bradlee,

Under any circumstances, yesterday would have been a depressing day for me. It was the anniversary of the King assassination and after six year I remain the only writer to question the official mythology about it.

My work was enough to move the courts.

But not the press or blacks.

And then last night I looked at the moving, eye-wetting From Montgomery to Memphis, concentration disturbed by all those thoughts of what should have been in a decent society and did not happen.

Consistent with the past, riches awaited those who prostituted themselves and proclaimed wrong to be right.

The mood lingers and I keep thinking how can all the things like this happen in our country and nothing ever be done. Seeing those snarling dogs again last night and pictures of Bull Connor reminded me that I was part of an exposure of him in the 1930s, an exposure both official and thorough. Yet he continued, doing worse and becoming more powerful.

Several night earlier I saw some Harlan County Kentucky footage. It reported conditions essentially unchanged from those also exposed in the 1930s, when again I was part of the investigation, that time of two, not one.

A concerned man has to think of these things with sorrow and regret, can't be insensitive to all the suffering they have meant and what society's failure to do anything about them has meant to all of society.

If the press had not failed, there would have been change.

As you should know going back almost a decade, despite experiences that are not encouraging I cling to the traditional concept of our press and try to discharge a citizen's responsibilities by trying to inform it. Back in May of 1966 I put in your hand a couple of pages of a suppressed official report that it had taken a year for anyone at the Post to even look at afterMac Mathias made a personal visit to your paper and made a personal plea for serious consideration of the work he had then read. You should also recall that I made no personal requests.

Not to chide you but to make you think I remind you of your instructions to Geoffrey Wolff that amounted to a direct order not to review my first book. (The Post has not even menioned any of those that followed.)

But because I believe a writer is a citizen first and because the Post is an influential paper I have consistently offered it information and provided it with documents on countless occasions, not once asking anything. I will continue because it is right for me to do this. With a decade of consistency perhaps you can believe it.

Oneof those things that made yesterday a downer is a line from one of those consistotly excellent while frequently inadequate Post editorials,"...the issue of fraud has not yet been satisfactorily laid to rest."

This is at once ambiguous and misrepresentative because for all practical purposes and particularly because of the failure of the press the question of fraud has been eliminated. Yet the most basic proof of fraud has not once been touched upon by the press.

The Post earned its Pulitzer but not for investigating. You did no investigating and to my personal knowledge you refused to. For all the great good you did, good for which the Post should forever be remembered with thanks, you still failed and with that failure all of history may have turned around.

If you think this is idle talk, any time you are prepared to maintain confidence, which will really mean for a man in your position facing a conflict of interest, I am prepared to show you what my own investigation in which poverty was not the greatest limitation has produced.

And this is why Nixon has us all and the future of the country turning, turning in the wind.

Let me illustrate for you the kind of thing the Post would not touch during all this journalistic derring do. A year and a half ago, long before the story broke by accident and in error, I told the Post about Nixon and his crooked dealings with property. Telling was accompanied by some of my correspondence with officials on it. You may not have known this, but I have a carbon of the letter and the original of the attachment.

At least a half-dozen major media elements have the same record.

Well, it seems that I can't give anything away, doesn't it?

But I have done all this work and I do expect to do much more and I do think it has value. So, what do I do with it?

Scholars and scholarly institutions now want it. Because it is my one tangible asset I am seeking foundation support for this. If I can accomplish this, then I will be seeking research fellowships so students can carry it forward.

So, instead of offering to give you something free when experience tells me you will not take it free, I offer you something not free.

I offer you the end of the ambiguity in the laying to rest of "the issue of fraud."

It means there has to have been an entirely unreported conspiracy inside the executive branch to accomplish this fraud involving at least two agencies and probably at least one more.

When it became apparent that Nixon would continue to toy with the country and the press on this, and after I was unable to give it away, including to another Washington Post property and through one well known to you, I initiated a different effort. I have asked a lawyer to initiate litigation for me. He has been busy but if there is no alternative, we will make the effort.

If you would like to explore fraud as it has not even been suggested and regard association with me as some kind of taint you can do it entirely on your own. I will show you how. If you are anxious, one way that might work would be to ask the Archives for a copy of the original of a Nixon Vice Presidential speech. Say the one his hardcore would not like today, as I recall made at Franklin and Marshall College in Pennsylvania. And if you are refused, invoke the Freedom of Information law. You have the Attorney General's Memorandum on it because I gave it to you. Just pursue refusal and if you are <u>really</u> a Pulitzer paper you ll get this on your own.

If you opt the easy way, I have done just about all of the necessary.

If you want an assessment of the probabilities, there are many Post reporters who have dealt with me over the years. Ask any one if I have ever given him a bum steer or if he has ever checked anything out and found me wrong.

Unless somebody does something, what the hell is going to happen to the country?

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg